

1. To maintain or increase fisheries productivity through conservation of fisheries habitat and stocks
2. To guide wise resource utilization through preparation and implementation of state fishery management plans and improved regulatory and enforcement activities
3. To improve and expedite management decisions by conducting carefully planned research and monitoring of the fisheries resources, habitat, user groups, and harvest methods
4. To promote conservation of the resources and habitat through increased interaction with resource users, including a marine resources education program
5. To improve all aspects of interjurisdictional fisheries management, both intrastate and interstate, by cooperating with other North Carolina agencies and the universities, the marine fisheries management agencies of other Atlantic coast states, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC), the Atlantic Coast regional Fishery Management Councils, and federal fisheries agencies
6. To provide public access to fisheries resources through development of specific access facilities in cooperation with other governmental entities

Fishery management plans (FMPs) have been prepared for species of importance to North Carolina through two organizational entities: (1) The Interstate Fisheries Management Program of the ASMFC, and (2) the regional Fishery Management Councils under the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (MFCMA, PL 94-265). The ASMFC program is concerned with species for which the predominant harvest occurs within internal waters of various coastal states and/or the Territorial Sea (the area extending offshore for three nautical miles from the ocean beach). Plans prepared by the Councils concern species harvested predominantly within the Exclusive Economic Zone of the United States (that area between three and two hundred nautical miles offshore). Table 1 lists the FMPs affecting North Carolina fisheries which have been prepared by the ASMFC and the Councils.

A total of 18 different objectives were identified in these nine ASMFC and six MFCMA plans, several of which were specific for a single plan. Four objectives could be considered as generic because they appear in more than half of the plans. These objectives are:

1. Maintain spawning stock(s) sufficient to minimize possible recruitment failure
2. Promote cooperative collection of biological, economic, and social data required to monitor and assess the stocks and plan implementation